

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANTANA 01368 201300Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
-----115476 210601Z /10 R
R 201241Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 772
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1368

NAIROBI FOR REDSO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, MA
SUBJ: PL-480 TITLE I FY 79 AND FY 80

REF: A) STATE 182291; B) ANT 0599; C) ANT 1308;
D) 76 ANT 0670 AND PREVIOUS

1. GREATLY APPRECIATE REFTEL INFORMING US WHEN TO
EXPECT DECISION ON PL 480 TITLE I RICE FOR MADAGASCAR.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHOULD BE CRANKED INTO
THE DECISION MAKING MACHINERY WHEN DETERMINING
APPROPRIATENESS OF TITLE I SALE TO MADAGASCAR. WHEN
I SAW THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY ON JULY 12 (REF C), I
COMMENTED TO HIM THAT NEITHER HE NOR OTHER MALAGASY
AUTHORITIES SEEMED PARTICULARLY DISTURBED T THE
RICE SHORTFALL THIS YEAR AND THE NECESSITY FOR
MADAGASCAR TO IMPORT THE GREATESTRNNUAL AMOUNT TO
DATE. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT THE REASON THERE
WAS NO "CRISIS" ATTITUDE ON THIS SUBJECT WAS BECAUSE
A) THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES WERE AT AN ALL TIME
HIGH, AND B) MADAGASCAR UTILL HAD 14,000 TONS OF
CLOVES IN STOCK WHICH IT WAS HOLDING OFF THE MARKET
IN ANTICIPATION OF A RISE IN PRICE. THE MINISTER
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SAID IT WAS NEVERTHELESS DISTURBING TO HAVE TO SPEND
MONEY ON RICE WHICH COULD BE USED FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, BUT THAT IT WAS NOT A CRITICAL MATTER.

3. I HOPE THAT HIS INFORMATION WILL NOT EFFECTIVELY
REMOVE MADAGASCAR FROM THE LIST OF POSSIBLE TITLE
I RECIPIENTS. THE MAIN REASON FOR SUCH A SALE

IS STILL POLITICAL AS SET FORTH IN REF B AND PREVIOUS
MESSAGES. AN OFFER I GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION

TO A REQUEST FOR A TITLE I PURCHASE COULD, IN
MY ESTIMATION, SHAKE U.S./MALAGASY RELATIONS OUT OF THE
SLOUGH OF DESPOND THEY HAVE BEEN IN SINCE 1975,
WITHOUT OUR SACRIFICING ANY POSITION OF PRINCIPLE
WHIVP WE HAVE HITHERTO MAINTAINED.

4. FOR THE RECORD, I ALSO WISH TO POINT OUT THAT A
REQUEST FOR A TITLE I PURCHASE WAS MADE BY MADAGASCAR
IN 1976 BUT SUMMARILY TURNED DOWN (REF D). IN 1975 IT
WAS MALAGASY SIDE THAT OBJECTED TO CONDITIONS ON
SUCH A SALE.BARRETT

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